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ART. VII. — 1. *What shall we do with the Insane ?* By  
EDWARD JARVIS. Louisville, Ky.  
2. *American Hospital Reports.*

It has always been a defect of the social system, that a part of the population is dependent upon the rest for the means of subsistence. It is as true in the nineteenth, as it was in the first century, "The poor ye have always with you"; and the question, which has been asked by statesmen of all ages and of all countries, "What can best be done with them?" remains as yet without a satisfactory answer. In its early stages, society disposes of the question summarily, ridding itself of the old and the helpless by violence or exposure; but with advancing civilization better feelings are developed, and men revolt at such treatment of the unfortunate. They preserve the feeble in life, and pauperism appears.

The first efforts for the relief of the dependent, are generally the dictates of blind feeling, unenlightened by intellect, and therefore they often fail of their object. Hence we see private charity, and charitable institutions, often disappointing the hopes of the benevolent; and vast and expensive systems for the relief of the poor are entailed upon society, which are of doubtful efficacy, if they do not act as positive premiums upon pauperism. At any rate, so many difficulties surround the subject, and so manifest has been the failure of public systems for the support of the poor, that many wise and good men question their expediency; and they adduce powerful arguments to show that society, as such, should never step forth to relieve want, which could have been foreseen and provided against, or to assume responsibilities and cares, which should devolve upon individuals. It is maintained, and with much plausibility, that private charity is the natural source of comfort and support for the suffering and the needy, and that it would be sufficient for all purposes, if society, by assuming the charge of the poor, did not prevent its exercise, and thus check its developement. Be this as it may, it is certain, that there are many cases of want or suffering, which in the present state of society could not have been foreseen or avoided by the victims; which private charity is not competent to relieve; and the care of which certainly

devolves upon society, especially as some of them are caused by its defective organization. Hence arises the obligation of society to provide for, and instruct helpless orphans, the blind, and the deaf-mutes, and to take care of the insane. It is of this last class that we propose to say a few words in the following article.

Of all the ills which flesh is heir to, there is perhaps none so dreadful as insanity. Utter poverty, hideous deformity, mutilation of limbs, deafness, blindness, all these, sad as they are, leave alive the human affections, and admit the consolations of sympathy and love ; while insanity not only makes man utterly dependent upon others for the supply of his physical wants, but it strips him of the noblest attributes of humanity. It so utterly sears his heart, that no affection for another can grow upon it, no love from others can penetrate within it ; and the unhappy victim sinks into apathetic indifference to common decency, or is so excited as to crush the life out of the mother who bore him, as coolly as he would trample upon a worm.

Of insane persons and idiots, there are, in the United States, according to the census of 1840, 17,434 ; in New England 3,576 ; and in Massachusetts, 1,271. Of these last, 644 are at public charge, and 627 at private charge. But, appalling as this statement is, it is unfortunately short of the truth, for the Pauper Abstract, published by the State authority in the same year, gave 887 as the number at public charge in Massachusetts. The cause of the discrepancy is clear ; the town officers, besides a personal acquaintance with all the individuals in their neighbourhood, have the means of knowing, from the town records, how many insane are at public charge ; while the United States Marshals, embracing larger sections, and taking hearsay evidence, miss those cases in which persons are ashamed to own they have an insane relative. The same discrepancy has occurred in other States, whence local returns have been made ; so that we are safe in putting down the insane and idiots of Massachusetts, who are at public charge, to be at least 887.\* There are no

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\* It is to be regretted, that the United States census is vitiated by carelessness in regard to the statistics of insanity. For instance, the number of insane, among colored people of certain towns, is put down as *greater than the whole number of colored people in the same towns* ; this is the case with nine towns in Maine, twelve in Michigan, one in Iowa, ten in Illinois, five

means of testing the accuracy of the United States census in regard to the number of those at private charge, which it states to be 627 ; but, the same causes for concealment operating still more strongly than in the case of the paupers, we may safely add to it in the same proportion, and compute the real number to be at least 862 ; which, added to that of the paupers, gives us the number of 1749 insane and idiots in this Commonwealth.

What is the duty of the State towards these its unfortunate children ? With regard to the paupers it is clear and imperative ; it is what should be the duty of every Christian government, — to provide the best means for the cure of the curable, and to take kind care of the incurable. This duty of society, besides being urged by every consideration of humanity, will be seen to be more imperative if we consider that insanity is in many cases the result of imperfect or vicious social institutions and observances. Most writers assert, that insanity is not known among savage nations ; but, without admitting this to be strictly true, it cannot be denied that civilization, in its progress, is rife with causes which over-excite individuals, and result in the loss of mental equilibrium. We have hardly space to allude to all of these ; but among them are revolutions, party strifes, unwise and capricious legislation, causing commercial speculations and disasters ; false standards of worth and rank ; undue encouragement of the propensities and passions ; social rivalry ; social intemperance ; some fashions and conventional usages ; religious and political excitement. These, and a variety of other causes, for which society is in fault, are productive of a large proportion of the cases of insanity which exist in its bosom. But if to these we add the still larger number, which arise from ignorance of the natural laws, which ignorance society should enlighten by providing proper public instruction, we can fairly lay at its door almost all of the cases of insanity which occur.

There is, of course, some uncertainty about the proportion

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in Indiana, thirty-seven in Ohio ; seven in Massachusetts ; one in Connecticut ; three in Vermont ; sixteen in New York ; and nine in New Hampshire ; nevertheless, the sums total of the whole State, are less than the more careful returns by local authorities of pauper statistics. We have found some errors also, though not important ones, in the return of blind persons.

of the insane to the whole population in large countries ; but the researches of scientific men have been sufficiently accurate for pretty near approximation to the truth ; and from these we learn, that, as a general rule, insanity is unknown among savage, and rare among barbarous nations, and that among civilized people it is most frequent where there is, if not the highest civilization, the greatest intensity of mental action.

In Holland the insane are in proportion to the whole population about as	.	.	.	1 to 1233.
“ France	.	.	.	1 “ 1000.
“ England	.	.	.	1 “ 793.
“ Scotland	.	.	.	1 “ 563.
“ New Hampshire	.	.	.	1 “ 466.
“ Connecticut	.	.	.	1 “ 425.
“ Massachusetts	.	.	.	1 “ 421.

This proportion, drawn from recent authorities, may not be exact to a fraction ; but we believe it to be about the true one. It would not seem, at first, to correspond with the difference of national character ; and yet in reality it does. An incident, which in a town of France or Italy would gather an eager, animated, excited crowd, would, in New England, attract the attention of a few quiet, cold, and silent observers ; but, long after the former had forgotten it, the latter would be pondering it deeply, and drawing from it a subject for moralizing or speculating. The *Bourse* of Paris, and the commercial marts of other European cities, will be filled with a bustling throng of agitated men, whose flashing eyes, shrill voices, and violent gesticulations would seem to indicate an intense anxiety about some daring speculation, or some momentous enterprise ; while *on Change*, in State Street, or Wall Street, you shall see men of the same class, engaged in bolder speculations, and more important enterprises, who yet are cool, and taciturn, and cautious. But follow the same groups to their evening occupations, and you will find the former enjoying a convivial dinner, or laughing at a comedy, while many of the latter are leaning their feverish heads upon their hands, and still pondering, with intense thought, upon the means of carrying on their bold schemes.

We, of the North, are called a cold-blooded people ; and it may be so ; but the blood rushes with the momentum, as

well as the coldness, of quicksilver, through our veins. We live upon the high-pressure principle within, and pile on additional atmospheres of caution and reserve without, in order to prevent an explosion. Men walk the streets with measured gait and solemn aim, looking as stiff as a steam-boat boiler, but, like that, perhaps, are heaving with an inward force just ready to rend them. There is no creed so comprehensive, no dogma so contracted, no scheme so wild, but cold and iron men will embrace and cherish it, with

“all the zeal,  
Which young and fiery converts feel.”

They wait not until a cloud, as big as a man's hand, shall portend that it is to cover the firmament, but the very specks on their finger nails, steadily regarded, soon grow big enough to exclude every thing else from their mental horizon. Then, the general and exciting struggle for wealth, with all its exhilarating hopes, its sudden reverses, its constant fluctuations ; and the more general anxiety for the good opinion of others, which twists so many into false positions, represses so many natural impulses, and gives so much care and anxiety about appearances.

But, be the causes what they may, here, within the precincts of Massachusetts, are more than seventeen hundred human beings, our fellow-citizens, who are insane or idiotic ; and of these, eight hundred and eighty-seven are entirely dependent upon the public for food and clothing, for the means of keeping out of fire and water, and for restraint from imbruing their hands in the blood of their fellows. And how does the public discharge its duty towards them ? The State makes provision, in its noble establishment at Worcester, for 229 patients, but the poor do not have the sole benefit of this ; and the County of Suffolk provides for 100 more, in its commodious and excellent Hospital at South Boston. The others, over 500 in number, are, for the most part, in the almshouses and the jails.

We select, for description, the establishment at South Boston, as we knew it under the excellent management of Dr. Butler, because its patients are wholly of the pauper class. The building is a commodious and pleasant one, constructed expressly for the purpose, with all the modern improvements, and pleasantly situated upon the seashore, with a garden in front. Its inmates were of the worst and

most hopeless class of cases ; they were the raving madmen, and the gibbering idiot, whom, in the language of the inspectors,\* we had formerly seen, “tearing their clothes amid severe cold, lacerating their bodies, contracting most filthy habits, without self-control, unable to restrain the worst feelings, endeavouring to injure those who approached them, giving vent to their irritation in the most passionate, profane, and filthy language ; fearing and feared, hating and almost hated !” Now, they are all neatly clad by day, and comfortably lodged in separate rooms by night. They walk quietly, and with self-respect, about the spacious and airy halls, or sit in listening groups around the daily paper ; or they dig in the garden, or handle edge-tools, or stroll about the neighbourhood with kind and careful attendants. They attend soberly and reverently upon religious exercises, and make glad music with their united voices. Such is the situation of the insane and idiots of the city of Boston ; and although only 28 out of 171 have been cured, and the rest will probably wear out their lives in hopeless insanity, yet there is a melancholy pleasure in witnessing the great amount of animal happiness they enjoy, in seeing the kind regard paid to prostrate humanity, — the respect shown to the deserted temple of reason. It is only, as it were, twining fresh flowers on the graves of the dead ; still it is a grateful sight to the humane, and a more certain indication of high civilization, than the most refined taste in literature and the arts, or the most fastidious observance of social etiquette.

But, alas ! such is not the picture presented by the insane in most other parts of our Commonwealth ; for, saving those at Worcester, they are incarcerated in the same prisons with criminals ; they are immured in narrow and cheerless cells ; they are under the charge of ignorant and sometimes of depraved persons ; or they are in the almshouses, shut up in cold and cheerless rooms, sometimes chained to the walls, often confined in narrow cages, without a chair or bed, and with nothing but the straw on which they lie down like the brutes.

But such general description cannot convey an adequate idea of the utterly forlorn and degraded condition, to which scores and hundreds of our brethren are reduced ; we will, therefore, give some particular cases, which we have our-

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\* *Report of the Inspectors of Prisons for the County of Suffolk*, December, 1841, pp. 44, 45.

selves witnessed, during the last three months, in places within thirty miles of Boston.

In one of these towns we approached a large old building, like a farmhouse, and were about to inquire for the poor-house, when our attention was attracted by a sort of cage or pen, constructed at the end of a wood-shed, facing upon the road. The thought occurred, that it might be the cage of an insane person. We dismounted and approached the place, and, looking through the bars, found it was a cage about six feet square. The floor was covered with trampled straw ; and we saw only an old, ragged, and filthy coverlet, in one corner ; but, as we looked more narrowly at this, a sudden motion of one side of it disclosed the head and face of a human being, which were hidden again, as soon as the glaring eyes had been fixed for an instant upon us.

The first shock was too painful to be described ; to find humanity so utterly degraded, to see a human being crouching, like a wild beast in his lair, caged up by the side of the public road, exposed to the gaze of every passer by, unwashed, unshaven, unshorn, with no covering but a filthy coverlet, with not even a cup of water by his side, was revolting beyond measure.

Having found the keeper of the house, we unfastened the door of the cage and entered it. There was no article of furniture at all ; nothing but the straw, with here and there a stale crust of bread. The poor inmate was crouching in a corner, and drawn up in the smallest possible space ; he would not speak nor move, except when we attempted gently to uncover his head, which he would bury in the folds of his rotten coverlet, and by his motions disclose to sight his naked limbs. We made some inquiries concerning his history, and found, that he was about forty years old ; that he had once been the owner of a small farm in the neighbourhood ; that he had suffered, or supposed he had suffered, grievous wrong, and had become a maniac ; he had been sent to a hospital, but was returned upon the town as incurable, and put into this den, probably for life. The keeper did not seem to be an inhuman man, but was ignorant, and utterly unfit for the care of the insane. On being asked, how he managed him, he replied, that he had now no difficulty, and “ had not *licked* him for over a year ! ” — that at first he “ had a fight with him, and had to knock him down four times

before he could master him ;” and that “ since then he had been obedient.” He added, however, that the overseers of the poor had charged him never to strike the man again.

In the next town to this, we found in a shed adjoining the almshouse, and in an inclosure twelve feet long by about eight feet wide, made with oak plank and without any window, a middle-aged man, stark mad, and in a state of entire nudity. His condition was about the same as that of the poor creature last described, except that his pen was larger, and was not exposed to the gaze of every passer-by ; but he was in a state of entire privation of all the comforts, and even of the common decencies, of life. The almshouse was clean, and the keeper’s family seemed worthy, humane people, who took good care of all the inmates, except the poor wretch in the shed ; for him, they seemed to think they had done all, when they thrust through the narrow opening in his cage, his daily allowance of food and drink.

In another town, the keeper of the almshouse conducted us to a small out-building, where we found a young man of fair complexion, clad in a coarse woollen dress, leaning motionless as a statue against the wall, and his eyes cast sadly down upon the trampled straw, which was the only furniture of his solitary pen. Around his bare neck was an iron collar, from which hung a heavy iron chain, by which he was fastened to the wall. He had been crossed in love ; had become a maniac ; was pronounced incurable, sent back upon the town, and chained up, for life, perhaps, like a wild hyena. Yet he seemed not to be dangerous ; we approached him, spoke to him, lifted his chain, and examined his condition. The keeper seemed to be a respectable farmer, and was disposed to do what he could for the sufferer, but that was nothing.

In another town, on inquiring at the almshouse, we were informed that there was one insane woman confined there. On requesting to see her, some reluctance was manifested, and a person was sent up stairs to make her decent, and to give her some kind of covering, as we were told that perhaps she was naked. We followed the attendant and found, in a large room, an old woman lying in bed, apparently near her end, and, on the other side of the room, a woman about forty years of age, extended upon the floor and covered with an old rug. This was the insane person, whom we found to be not

furious, but quiet and timid. She was reluctant to rise ; but, when she did so, we found that she was chained by the leg, and fastened to the wall. And this because the town would not afford the gentle sufferer an attendant to keep her out of harm ; for we were told that she was not dangerous, but that she would wander about, or divest herself of her clothes, and perhaps hurt herself, and therefore they chained her up.

On a visit to the prison and almshouse in yet another town, we found twenty-two lunatics in the former, and three in the latter. Those in the prison seemed comfortable, as it regards food, clothing, and lodging ; but were mixed up without any regard to classification, and without any proper care, so that the mild and curable might soon become as bad as the worst. At the almshouse, far away from the inhabited part of the building, in a sort of shed, were built up three cages, in one of which was confined a poor drivelling idiot, — cold, filthy, and neglected. Opposite to him was a strong middle-aged man, storming up and down in his dismal and dirty pen, brandishing his naked arms, and blaspheming at the top of his voice. In the next enclosure, separated only by coarse plank, which hardly obstructed vision, was a poor, trembling, comely girl, scarcely seventeen years old. She was not insane, nor entirely idiotic, they said, but only *silly*. And for this she was confined in a pen, far away from any of her sex ; in close proximity with a half naked, yelling maniac, and within a few feet of a gibbering idiot ! Of all the sad sights we saw in that town, the image of this poor girl will rest longest on the memory. As we unfastened the door of her wretched apartment, and entered it, she slunk trembling away, and crouched whining in a corner ; and, as we stretched out a hand toward her, she screamed, as if anticipating a blow ; but, when we placed it gently on her head, and spoke in kindly tones to her, the screams subsided into a giggling laugh, which was not so silly but that it indicated pleasure, and we thought gratitude, for unexpected kindness.

We could furnish many other cases of almost equal horror, which we have ourselves witnessed ; and, should we be allowed to make extracts from the journal of a friend, who has traversed every part of Massachusetts on an errand of mercy, and taken note of the condition of the inmates of jails and almshouses, we could fill a volume ; but enough has been

said, we trust, to awaken the sympathies of our readers, and to enlist them in behalf of the effort now making to provide comfortable accommodations for all the insane of this State. And, if there be any whose zeal should wane, after they have closed these pages, let them think of that poor girl whom we have described,—not indeed as we have feebly portrayed her, but as she is now, when night comes on, and she is left in darkness, and crouches down trembling upon her straw, and stops her ears as she hears the strong maniac howling in the next pen, and perhaps smiting with heavy fists upon the boards which make their only separation; and let them reflect that there are many such cases of misery among us; that they themselves, or, what they would account worse, some sister or friend, may one day be brought into the like situation.

It may be asked, Is it possible that the inhabitants of Massachusetts are so ignorant or so inhuman as to allow such treatment? We answer they are neither ignorant nor inhuman. They have made proper provision for a greater proportion of their insane than any other large community in the world; and a careful investigation would show, that in other States of this Union, and in other countries, the condition of the insane, out of the public hospitals, is quite as bad, if not worse than it is in our almshouses and jails. Indeed, from cases which have fallen under our observation, we are inclined to think it is worse; and we could give some descriptions that would shock every sensitive mind. We shall, however, insert only one case in this country, described by Dr. Jarvis, who says he once saw in Pennsylvania, in 1837,

“a poor female confined in a restraining chair made of plank; one strap confined each arm, another the waist, and another passed over the thighs and held her down to her narrow prison. This girl was in a state of furious excitement; she was using the greatest struggles to extricate herself; she was kicking up her feet, endeavouring to strike any one near her; she was boisterous, and spat on any one within reach; she was the very image of a raging fury; and we were told that she had been in this excitement for three years, and the same means of straps and chairs had been as long used to calm her! We trust a similar instance cannot be found elsewhere in America.” \*

And this was in the great Blockley Almshouse Hospital,

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\* *Insanity and Insane Asylums*, by E. Jarvis, M. D., Louisville, Ky.

under the care of the medical professors of the University of Pennsylvania, who take their crowds of students round to teach them practically the treatment of disease. What then must be the condition of the insane in remote and small almshouses.

In Great Britain, it is well known how deplorable was the condition of the insane a few years ago. Browne, a writer of authority, says, that "the accommodations in the Asylum at Limerick appear to be such as we should not appropriate for our dog-kennels." In the mass of evidence elicited by a Parliamentary Report, it is said, one victim was confined

"in one of the oblong troughs, chained down; he had evidently not been in the open air for a considerable time; for, when I made them bring him out, he could not endure the light. Upon asking him, how often he had been allowed to get out of the trough, he said, 'perhaps once a week, and sometimes not for a fortnight.' He was not in the least violent; he was perfectly calm."

Miss Martineau, in her account of the Hanwell Asylum, gives some instances of prejudice and inhumanity, which it would be hard to match in this country. Not only were the convalescent patients forbidden to worship in the church, but they could not ride out in the neighbourhood, lest the delicate nerves of the inhabitants should be shocked.

"A pony chaise had been procured by the superintendent of the insane asylum, in order to present a temptation to many of the patients to prolong their excursions to a distance, and to enable the weak or indolent to diversify their walks within the ground by drives through the neighbourhood. But the inhabitants protested against such an invasion of their rights, such a destruction of their comforts. They could not, forsooth, so delicate was their sensibility, bear the sight of mad people. The circumstance was again attended to, and the lunatic is again deprived of his transient glimpses of happiness, of his visits to what is literally to him another world."\*

Esquirol says, of the insane in France,

"I have seen them naked or covered with rags, with nothing but a layer of straw to protect them from the cold dampness of the ground upon which they lay. They were kept upon food of the coarsest kind; they were deprived of fresh air to breathe,

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\* *Browne on Insanity.* Edinburgh. 1837. p. 173.

and of water to quench their thirst, and even of the most necessary things of life. I have seen them given up to the brutal supervision of jailers. I have seen them in their narrow cells, filthy and unwholesome, without air or light, chained in such dens as one might hesitate to confine ferocious beasts in."

It is reasonable to infer, that, in the less civilized countries of Europe, the condition of the insane is no better; for although, in most of the capitals, asylums have been established upon scientific or humane principles, yet, in the remote districts, all the old horrors are still practised.

The Turks have obtained great credit for humanity to the insane, upon as small capital as for other kinds of humanity. We remember to have known a party of them, closely besieged in a castle, and suffering for water, to let down their donkeys and mules by ropes from the walls, and permit them to fall into the hands of their besiegers rather than to kill them or let them feel the want of water; and we should have supposed them to be merciful, had we not known that they retained their Christian captives, and saw them going round at daybreak, licking from the stones the little moisture that had been deposited in the night, and gradually perishing with thirst.

As for their alleged respect for the insane, they allow those who are not violent to go about, and they pay them a certain superstitious attention, which is sometimes respect, and sometimes mockery. But, the moment they suppose them dangerous, they chain them up; and this not out of regard to the insane, or to others, but to themselves; for the infidels do not chain up their fierce dogs, which, in the time of our perigrations, at least, were more to be feared than the lunatics, by all but their own masters. As for the medical attention, which they pay to their confined lunatics, we never heard of any other than the administration of a broth made of snakes at every full moon; while for the moral treatment, that is told by the clanking of chains, the cracking of whips, and the shrieks of the inmates, which may be heard without the walls of the hospital of Cairo, and of the *Timarhane* of Constantinople.

But the short-comings of others are no excuse for our own; and although we believe, that, as we have already said, no large community on earth has made comfortable provision for so large a proportion of the insane, as has the State of

Massachusetts, still far be it from the citizens of that liberal Commonwealth to say, pharisaically, in extenuation of any fault, "We are not as other men." The evil is before them ; it is in their power to remove it ; it is clearly their duty to remove it ; and, although no provision at all were made for the insane out of their territory, they should not leave one unprovided for within it.

To say nothing, then, of the 813 insane who are not paupers, and for whom society should provide proper receptacles, although the State is not strictly bound to do so, there are 887 lunatics and idiots who are pauper dependents upon the public. Of these, 250 can be received at Worcester (by crowding), 125 at South Boston, and perhaps 25 at the McLean Asylum. What shall be done with the remaining 487 ?

It may be demonstrated, we believe, that, in consequence of the number that can be cured, and thus taken from public charge, the expense of keeping them in hospitals would soon be less than under the present system ; for, in the words of the Inspectors of the Boston Hospital, "although a patient costs more in a hospital, than in a house of correction or house of industry, yet the smaller number remaining at one time in a hospital, will, before long, cost much less than the larger number of incurable cases accumulating in a house of correction, or house of industry, under the former system."

But we are not inclined to urge the argument of economy, in the matter of duty so sacred, that, until discharged, we have no right to erect monuments to battles, or public works of art, or even costly temples to God. Under the name of economy, the insane and idiots of our own country, have been, and are now, kept in a state of physical degradation which is painful to them, and demoralizing to others. In many towns their keeping for one year is hired out at public auction, in town meeting, to the man who will agree to keep souls and bodies together for the smallest number of dollars and cents ; and in many others, the selectmen or overseers of the poor of each year, strive to gain popularity by keeping them in the almshouse for a few mills, or cents, cheaper than their predecessors did. Is it not strange, that Christian men can make it a matter of boast, that, with the public purse-strings in their hands, they have kept town paupers alive three hundred and sixty-five days upon eight cents and five mills per day ? And yet some have done it, and will

do it, so long as people shall look in every thing to others for approval.

We maintain, that, in the present state of society, the insane and idiots cannot be kept in the almshouse without physical suffering and abuse, and degradation ; without becoming worse themselves, and presenting a demoralizing picture to others ; without immorality and sin. Much might be said upon the demoralizing influence, upon our children, of thus treating our fellow-creatures. The Spartans, when they made their Helots drunk in public, at least extracted from humanity, which they degraded and crushed, a moral on temperance, for their children ; but we, when we show them a man made in God's image, degraded below the brutes, less cared for than the horse and the ox, exhibit our own shame, and teach them a lesson of unmitigated immorality. Hence, it is no uncommon thing to have a crowd of boys about an almshouse cage, trying by mockery, and perhaps by throwing stones, to rouse up the unhappy insane man from temporary quiet, or sleep, into raving fury.

There are objections equally strong against confining the insane, even those who are incurable, in jails and houses of correction. In answer to a query on this subject Dr. Woodward, of the Massachusetts Lunatic Asylum at Worcester, writes to us thus ; " In the jails, the insane are hardly in a better condition than in the almshouses ; they are crowded together in apartments badly warmed and ventilated ; or they are secluded in some solitary room, cold, dirty, ragged, without society, with bad air to breathe, and scanty and bad food to eat." Besides, the sense of justice revolts at the thought of incarcerating innocent victims of misfortune in the receptacle of guilt ; and the voice of experience tells us, that when so confined they grow more violent, or sink into *dementia*, are neglected, and ill treated. The jailers and keepers of houses of correction, may be men of humanity ; but they do not know how to treat insanity any more than they know how to treat scarlet fever ; nor have they the means to do so, provided they did know.

County hospitals have been proposed ; but against them every one who is acquainted with the subject will protest, unless indeed they can be so large, and so well endowed as to form independent establishments, with a medical superintendent, and a corps of officers and attendants, who should be exclusively devoted to them. An establishment for the in-

sane must be a thing by itself; must have its own peculiar organization, and not be part of, or an appendage to, another institution; else it will degenerate into a place of mere safe-keeping.

The County of Essex is now building a house of correction at Ipswich; and one wing, with six rooms, is to be devoted to lunatics. This we look upon as a misfortune, because we feel confident, that, as a part of the house of correction, this establishment will not be a proper place for the insane. Their treatment will not form, as it should, the sole object of the establishment. It will be a very poor receptacle for the insane, and yet it will make them so much more comfortable than they are now, in a merely physical point of view, that a half-century will elapse before fully adequate provision will be made for them; because the cost of this building will form an argument for its continued use.

There is no county in Massachusetts (except perhaps Suffolk), where the insane would be deemed numerous enough, or important enough, to require a separate establishment, and the undivided care and attention of a man of eminent talents. Even in that county, indeed, the superintendent is physician to all the other city establishments; and, we are sorry to add, that there has appeared a disposition on the part of some to curtail this beautiful establishment of its present fair proportions, to reduce its expenses to the minimum cost of keeping soul and body together, and to sink it to a mere receptacle for the safe-keeping of paupers, lunatics, and idiots.

On this subject Dr. Woodward writes to us thus; "The proposed county institutions for the insane, can only be of the nature of insane poor-houses, and cannot, in the small counties of the Commonwealth, be provided with the necessary officers, and other means of making them comfortable, without involving an expense greater than that of supporting them in the public institutions at the present prices." Dr. Bell of the McLean Asylum says, "I regard county asylums, and private madhouses, as wholly out of the question."

What then shall be done? It seems to us, that several steps are to be taken; but that the first one should be, to devote the State Hospital to the exclusive accommodation of paupers, in preference to patients who pay. In the last Report from this Institution, it was stated, that one hundred pa-

tients were town paupers, thirty were State paupers, and one hundred were paying patients. The total number at this time is two hundred and forty-one, of whom thirty-four are State paupers, seventy-seven town paupers, and one hundred and thirty are paying patients. It is true, that some of this latter class may be indigent, that the towns may now pay part, and hereafter pay all their expenses ; but it is equally true, that some are fully competent to pay their own expenses at other asylums. Now the hospital is full to overflowing ; and, as every one who is committed by a Judge of Probate must be received, others must be sent out to make room for them. The trustees discharge such as are selected by the superintendent ; and sometimes it happens, that a pauper, who has no earthly friend, is torn away from what had become to him a comfortable and happy home, and thrust back into the noisome and filthy cage, which had been his prison long years before.

We said, he had no earthly friend, but we were wrong. He has what should be a mighty, and kind, and watchful friend of the innocent poor. He has the State, who built this hospital for him, and who should keep him in it, though the wealthiest in the land were knocking for admission at its doors. Nevertheless, although one hundred and thirty paying patients are now in the hospital, there have been discharged for want of room since December 1st, 1841, no less than seventy-eight paupers, as incurable ; of whom seventeen would be confessedly dangerous going at large. Most of these unhappy persons have been sent to almshouses, and several of them to jails.\*

The following case, which has just come to our knowledge, will show the fate of many of these poor creatures. Elizabeth Stevens, aged about forty years, was formerly confined as a lunatic, in a jail ; and was as wretched, wild, and ungovernable as such persons usually are, in such places. Five years ago, she was sent to Worcester, where she was quiet and comfortable, decent and happy. She kept her room and her person tidy ; was never violent ; would employ herself in knitting ; attended church regularly, and,

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\* These numbers are taken from a letter of Dr. Woodward. We have since then seen the returns for the year, up to December 1st, and find some slight discrepancies, which it is too late to rectify ; they do not, however, affect the principle.

up to the 9th of October last, behaved with propriety. On the 12th of October, she was removed, to make way for others, and carried to the jail of the town. The sight of this roused her to fury, and she refused to enter ; but she was carried in by force, and became again a raving maniac. Since then she has been furious ; has broken up her bucket, burned her straw bed, smashed her bedstead and her windows, stripped off her clothes, attacked the keeper with an iron grate, and committed every possible outrage ; the result probably will be, that she must be chained up, or confined in a cage !

Far be it from us, to say one word in detraction of the Worcester Hospital, that bright ornament of Massachusetts, among the brightest of those tributes to humanity, of which she has paid so many. Founded as it was, mainly by the disinterested efforts of that philanthropic citizen, who is now so freely expending his remaining energies for the education and elevation of future generations ; and administered, as it has been, with extraordinary energy, benevolence, and skill, it deserves, and it has, our warmest admiration. It has been a haven of rest, and comfort, and joy, to 1557 unfortunate wrecks of humanity, whose rudder of reason was broken, whose mental compass was lost, who were tossed upon the stormy ocean of life, under a darkened sky, and blown about by every gust of passion ; of these, it has sent forth 667 repossessed of their reason, capable of continuing their voyage of life, and of being the guides and protectors of their once fatherless children. High honor then, and thanks, and gratitude, be accorded to the founders and managers of this truly noble charity ; but if, by any means, it can be made to confer its benefits more exclusively upon the poor and destitute, and less upon those who have money and friends, let it be done.

We are aware of the difficulties in the way. The law requires, that the furiously mad, who are dangerous to be at large, shall be first admitted ; but, even here, preference should be given to paupers, and the man who can pay for his care should be obliged to send him to some other hospital, if this be full. It is sometimes difficult to tell who can pay, and who cannot ; and it is clear, from the statistics of the establishment, that many poor are excluded, to make room for those more blessed with worldly goods ; but, at

the same time, it is certain, that there is a looseness about the mode of admission. Patients are sometimes carried to Worcester, with a view of being entered as private pay patients ; but when it is found, that they cannot be received, unless committed by a judge, the friends then apply to one ; the Judges of Probate cannot, or do not, discriminate well in all cases ; and many patients are doubtless committed as dangerous, who are not so, and whose relatives would send them to other establishments, were it not that the State opens them an asylum of the first class, at a price less than the actual cost of their support.

That this is the case, is apparent from the statistics, not only of the State Hospital, but of the McLean Asylum. That establishment, which has always been conducted without ostentation, but upon the highest moral principles, and in the most scientific manner, was founded for the benefit of the insane of this State, giving them the preference over strangers. It received, during the five years preceding the establishment of the State Hospital, 409 patients, of whom only 51, or one-eighth, were from without the State ; while, during the last five years, it received 702 patients, of whom 237, or one-third of the whole, were from without the State, no application having been refused in either period. Now it would be a waste of words to show, that many patients from Massachusetts, who would have gone there, and paid three or four dollars per week, have been sent to Worcester, not because their chance of cure was any better, but because they could be received much cheaper. And yet, during this very time, pauper patients were every month sent away from the State Asylum for want of room, and consigned to the cages and chains of almshouses and jails. It may be said they were incurable, but that matters not to us ; the first duty of the State is to the pauper, and he should not be consigned to a cage, though he be incurable, to make way for a curable paying patient. We do not know the views of the Trustees of the McLean Asylum, but we believe, that, should the State Hospital be closed to all paying patients, there would be a steady demand for admission by patients from Massachusetts, and that provision for 50 more would be made, which (by changing on an average once in six months) would accommodate 100 yearly.

This, however, would be but one step ; for, when the

Worcester Hospital and the South Boston Asylum shall be full of pauper lunatics, there will still be between four and five hundred unprovided for. Now, granting that of these more than 50 per cent. are the entirely demented and merely vegetating idiots, there will remain over 200 unprovided for ; and what shall be done with them ?

Believing, as we do, that the number of patients in one establishment should never be so large, that the superintendent cannot make himself acquainted with the daily condition of every curable patient, and bring the influence of his own sane mind to bear upon the deranged ones, we should dislike to see overgrown establishments. Dr. Woodward, in his last Report, says ;

“ Every year, since the Hospital was established, we have had applications enough to fill a good-sized establishment. While it may be doubtful, whether this institution should be enlarged, it is greatly to be desired, that all the insane should find a retreat in an institution designed for their benefit, and especially, that all recent cases should have the means of cure. The appropriations for the accommodation of such should be liberal, and the means of support ample. *Humanity*, as well as *true economy*, dictates this.”

The best plan, then, would be, to build a second State Asylum, in some other place, and provide it with accommodations for 200 or 250 patients. There is another consideration in favor of a separate hospital, and that is, the advantage it would offer for classification, with reference, not to the actual condition of the insane, but to their previous character. Every insane pauper becomes the ward of society ; but prostitutes, criminals, foreign vagabonds, inebriates, &c., have a claim altogether secondary and inferior to that of the virtuous poor. They should be separated from them, and, if possible, kept in a different establishment ; for, be it remembered, even the insane do not lose their self-esteem, and this is often sadly wounded by the necessary herding together in public establishments.

If, however, it should be urged, that the financial situation of the State will not allow the hope of a new hospital, there is still a way by which, without the outlay of so large a sum as would be necessary for a new hospital, additional accommodations may be had for 200 patients, and that is, by adding wings to the Worcester Asylum. Indeed, this may

be done without encroaching much upon the treasury ; for the fund left by Mrs. Johonnot, for the benefit of the insane, amounts to about \$40,000, and it is burdened with annuities amounting to only \$2500. The State may assume these annuities, for the time they have to run, and apply the principal to enlarging the Worcester Hospital. It will then embrace all the worst cases ; and, provided that grand-juries and citizens will do their duty, there will be a general almshouse and jail delivery of all the unfortunate victims confined in them. It may be necessary to put the price of supporting town paupers very low ; perhaps even some legislation may be necessary, to prevent the confinement of lunatics in almshouses and jails ; but these would be minor difficulties, and would be soon overcome. Massachusetts would then have done, what no other State or community has done, but which is just as much her duty, as though every nation in the world had performed it before her. She will have provided every possible means for the cure, or the comfort, of the unfortunate insane, who, in the course of events, are thrown upon her care.

The arrangement which we have proposed will furnish only a partial remedy ; for, besides the paupers, there will be over five hundred insane unprovided for. But the pressure will fall mainly on the paying patients, and for these we care less, because they have friends to care for them. They can be sent out of the State, or, if any must be sent from the State hospital to the jails and almshouse-cages for safe-keeping, let it be the rich man's son or daughter, and not the poor man's child. Indeed it might not be ill, that the rich should suffer a little what the poor have been and are still suffering ; for one or two cases only would raise a clamor, which would at once provide sufficient hospital accommodations for all.

There are excellent hospitals recently established in Maine and in Vermont, which are not yet full ; and, should they not suffice, new establishments would start up at once. It is true, there are great objections to private madhouses ; the recent developements in England show what horrid abuses are there committed, even at this day ; and we fear, that there are some in this country where a grand jury might find matter for presentment. It is certainly highly desirable, that the State should furnish a place, where all its lunatic

subjects might be treated for a moderate compensation ; but this, we repeat, is not strictly a State's legal duty, while the care of the paupers is both a legal and a moral duty. Let that then be first discharged, and let us trust, that, when the present generation of incurable cases shall have passed away, better treatment will prevent such an accumulation again ; while stricter temperance, and a more general acquaintance with physiology, will diminish the proximate causes.

Let all then, who, by word or deed, can command any influence, exercise it to discharge this duty, and to confer this blessing upon those whom misfortune has made dependent upon them. Let them visit the almshouses and prisons, and see for themselves the deplorable condition of their brethren ; their visits will at least have the effect of causing greater vigilance, cleanliness, and attention on the part of the keepers. There is room here for all to work, women as well as men. Come, then, ye whose bosoms heave with just indignation at the oppression of man in distant lands ; here are victims of dreadful oppression at your very doors. Come, ye who lament the heathenish customs of ignorant pagans, and would fain teach them Christianity ; here are worse than heathenish customs in our very towns and villages. Come, ye who are filled with sickly sentimentality, who weep over imaginary sufferings of imaginary beings, who sigh for some opportunity of doing heroic deeds, who are speculating upon human progress ; here are realities to be grappled with, here is misery to be alleviated, here is degraded humanity to be lifted up.

Finally, let the State government be urged to make immediate and ample provision for *all* the indigent insane, cost what it may cost. Massachusetts is not too poor to do any thing that can be shown to be her duty.

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